

## **NATO IS 60: MISSION CONTINUED**

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### **Summary**

**The main conclusion of the NATO jubilee summit is that time is not up yet for NATO to make conclusions.**

**On April 4, 1949 12 states signed in Washington the North Atlantic Treaty, laying the foundations for the organization known as NATO. 60 years later, on April 3-4, 2009 Strasbourg, France, and the nearby Kehl, Germany, hosted the 23rd meeting of the Heads of State and Governments of the Alliance to mark the anniversary. So what is today's NATO like, what problems is it dealing with and what are its prospects?**

The first 'double' NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl was both a symbolic, solemn and working meeting. Its symbolic dimension lies in the fact that it marked the continuation of 60 years' peace and co-operation between France and Germany, the restoration of united and free Europe after the end of the 'Cold War,' and France's return to NATO military command bodies. The practical dimension of the summit is also very significant and diverse.

The crisis of the established world order and the need to seek new institutional and legal supports in the unbalanced international system pushes all the leading actors of the international politics to co-operation. **Under these circumstances, NATO's role is expanding rather than diminishing.**

### **Strengthening Trans-Atlantic Solidarity and NATO Enlargement**

The Alliance is not isolated from new tectonic processes in the unstable international system. Both the system as a whole and its major structural components, including states, alliances and international organizations, are going through a complicated transformation or even an actual crisis, like the one experienced by the international financial architecture.

However, it has become evident that yet another myth of NATO's yet another death has blown up. All the anticipations of a fiasco concerning the agreements and a split-up on the grounds of the emerging contradictions as to the ways of solving internal and external problems were vain. France's return to NATO military command bodies demonstrates a new level of trans-Atlantic co-operation and the Alliance's further strengthening.

The summit welcomed Albania and Croatia as new NATO members and reaffirmed that it remains open to east European states, which can join it if they are able to achieve the required standards and contribute to joint security. **The number of NATO member states has reached 28. There are 22 states participating in the Partnership for Peace NATO-led program.** Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Montenegro are implementing individual partnership programs and have expressed their willingness to

join the Membership Action Plan. (MAP) Serbia has prepared the first Individual Partnership Program. The tools of NATO's co-operation with the countries willing to obtain its membership and partner states are becoming more flexible. There will be a further development of the instruments of military and political co-operation within the framework of the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC).

In Strasbourg/Kehl NATO members confirmed the decision made at the previous summit in Bucharest in 2008 and at the December 2008 meeting of Foreign Ministers that **Ukraine and Georgia would be its members**. Towards this end, many-sided assistance they are receiving in implementing reforms will be strengthened to a 'maximal possible degree.' NATO has established bilateral commissions with Georgia and Ukraine and initiated annual national programs, actually equivalent to MAP. NATO information and communication offices in Kyiv and Chisinau will also come to play a more important role. The Alliance stresses that its mutually beneficial and fruitful relations with Ukraine and Georgia would make an essential contribution to regional and Euro-Atlantic security.

### Trans-Atlantic Strategy for Eastern Neighborhood?

The April summit documents have no detailed statements on the East European region, as it was not a priority compared to Afghanistan, Russia, and strategies towards new worldwide threats.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the situation in the region is becoming more complicated, and the Alliance members are continuing their debate on the subject. One of the approaches, proposed by Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, foresees shaping a trans-Atlantic strategy for the whole Eastern Neighbourhood. It should also include such a component as energy security and concrete projects in the energy sphere<sup>2</sup>. Both NATO and the EU could be guided by this approach.

It is noticeable that at the US and EU summit meeting in Prague, which took place just after the NATO summit, where US President Barack Obama expressed his support for the EU Eastern Partnership program, a lot of attention was given to the issues of energy security and ways of decreasing energy dependence within the EaP framework, among other things.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the phrase 'forgotten neighbors', as the West often called Belarus until recently, may well forever be forgotten as a bad metaphor.

US Permanent Representative to NATO Ambassador Kurt Volker aptly formulated the Alliance's stance towards Eastern Europe, 'We need to be helping people in Europe -- Ukrainians, Georgians, Moldovans, Belarusians, whomever -- who want to build the same kind of democratic, more prosperous, safe, secure societies that we have and that others in Europe have built since 1989 -- the Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, and so on. So those people deserve our support..<sup>4</sup>

NATO – Russia partnership was defined as a strategic component of strengthening security in the Euro-Atlantic region.<sup>5</sup> NATO – Russia Council will resume its work. Instead of 'zero sum game' competition Russia is offered **strategic dialog and practical co-**

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<sup>1</sup> de Hoof Scheffer, Jaap. NATO at 60: the way forward.

<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2009/0902/090205/EN/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> President Adamkus: NATO must constantly review its policy toward Russia. 04.04.2009.

[http://www.president.lt/en/activities/press\\_releases/president\\_adamkus\\_nato\\_must\\_constantly\\_review\\_its\\_policy\\_toward\\_russia.html](http://www.president.lt/en/activities/press_releases/president_adamkus_nato_must_constantly_review_its_policy_toward_russia.html)

<sup>3</sup> Pop, Valentina. US backs Eastern Partnership eyeing energy independence. 06.04.2009.

<http://euobserver.com/9/27920/?rk=1>

<sup>4</sup> Volker, Kurt. 'NATO: A Strong and Effective Alliance for the Future.' World Affairs Council of Philadelphia.

December 10, 2008. [http://nato.usmission.gov/ambassador/2008/Amb\\_Volker\\_WACP\\_121008.htm](http://nato.usmission.gov/ambassador/2008/Amb_Volker_WACP_121008.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/Kehl on April 4 2009. 04 Apr. 2009.

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_52837.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm)

**operation** on such issues as AMD, Afghanistan, Iran, etc.,<sup>6</sup> which, however, does not give it the right to veto other states' sovereign decisions or create 'zones of influence.'

### New Strategic Concept

The Declaration on Alliance Security, adopted at the summit, entitles the Secretary General to set up and head a group of qualified experts in order to develop a new Strategic Concept (the current one was adopted in 1999) in close co-operation with all the allies and submit proposals on its implementation for approval at the next summit.<sup>7</sup> Working up a new Strategy Concept is interconnected with a project on modeling NATO Futures, which involves both member states and partners.

Among the most complicated problems that the Strategy Concept is supposed to throw light on is how to find the right balance between the obligations concerning NATO's conventional collective defence, on the one hand, and the necessity to modernize and transform the Alliance in order to combat new threats, on the other. **Paradoxically, while the Alliance is prepared to combat threats that are unlikely to come true any more, it is not yet prepared enough to combat newly emerging threats, to say nothing of unpredictable future risks.** NATO has to find its way between two extremes: fixation on expeditionary operations, on the one hand, or return to conventional territorial defence, on the other. A natural alternative would be to regard both missions as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.<sup>8</sup> According to military experts, modern requirements to be met by military forces do not presuppose any essential difference in their training and equipment for operations within the conventional control zone and beyond it.

### Belarus and NATO: a Window of Opportunity Is Open

Belarus – NATO co-operation is being consistently intensified in the military field. The Belarusian Permanent Delegation to NATO has been functioning in Brussels since 1998. It consists of five diplomats with Ambassador Sianko at its head. In recent years, it has been working more and more actively. In addition, there is a Belarusian military representative and a communication officer of the Ministry for Defence attached to the Partnership Co-ordination Group in Monce near Brussels.

At present, Belarus and NATO are implementing the 8<sup>th</sup> two-year Individual Partnership Program (the first one was prepared in 1997). Within its framework, Belarus has taken part in as many as 170 events, ranging from exchange visits, consultations, seminars and conferences to a variety of courses and some exercises. The area of co-operation includes combating international terrorism and transnational organized crime, counteraction against WMD proliferation, population and territory protection against emergencies of natural and technogenous nature, etc.

In 2004 Belarus joined PARP, which allows it to obtain the required experience in enhancing the army's training and their possible participation in peacekeeping operations.

As a result of implementing a joint project of NATO Technical Maintenance Agency and the Belarusian Ministry for Defense to liquidate TNT-containing antipersonnel mines with the financial assistance of such NATO members as Canada and Lithuania, Belarus

<sup>6</sup> Kupchan, Charles. Decision time: NATO's hard choices. NATO Review. 2009. No. 2.

[http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2009/0902/0902\\_NATOFUTURE/EN/index.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2009/0902/0902_NATOFUTURE/EN/index.htm)

<sup>7</sup> Declaration on Alliance Security. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/Kehl on 4 April 2009. 04 Apr. 2009.

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_52838.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52838.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Korski, Daniel. Keeping in shape at 60. NATO Review. 2009. No. 2.

<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2009/0902/090201/EN/index.htm>

liquidated about 300,000 AP mines. Expert Council of Science for Peace and Security (SPS) NATO Committee adopted another joint Belarus – NATO project to build facilities to eliminate dangerous chemical substances kept on the territory of Belarus. Belarusian scientists are participating in a number of projects within the SPS framework.

**For Belarus, the restoration of trans-Atlantic unity and updating the Alliance's strategy with a focus on multilateral co-operation in solving crucial international problems opens a window of opportunity to make a real breakthrough in its relations with the EU, the United States and NATO, and to get considerable tangible benefits from this engagement.** As a possible initial step, Belarus could accept the Alliance's offer made Deputy Assistant to NATO Secretary General Robert Simmons made during his visit to Minsk in December 2008 to move to a higher level of co-operation. It could also be possible to intensify a political dialogue between NATO and Belarus and to lift it, by using and developing the existing formats, to a higher level, such as the Partnership for Peace program on the bilateral level and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council on the multilateral level.

For this purpose, would be worthwhile, among other measures, to **restore the Belarusian parliamentary bodies' associated membership in NATO Parliamentary Assembly, to** set up an information center in Minsk, and to develop both multilateral co-operation between partners at the level of governments, the governmental level, mixed bodies (such as the Consortium of Military Academies and Security Institutes) and non-governmental organizations, such as the Atlantic Treaty Association (that does not have any suitable partner in Belarus to be its member at the moment), to name a few.